

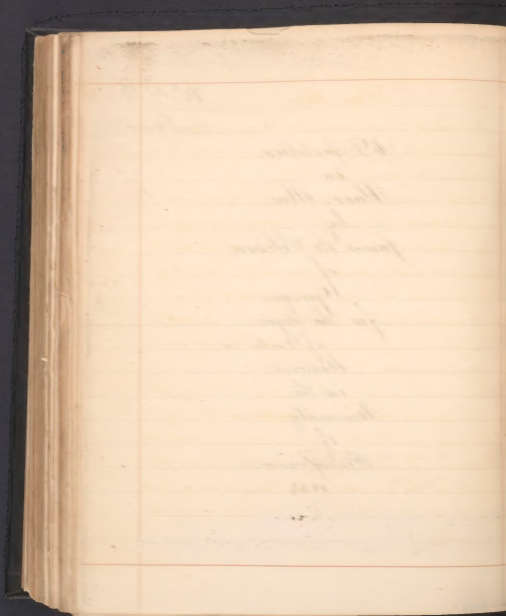
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W. & A.

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A Dissertation,
on,
Haem. Albus,
by,
James B. Peterson.
of
Georgia;
for the degree
of Doctor in
Medicine,
in the
University
of
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1824



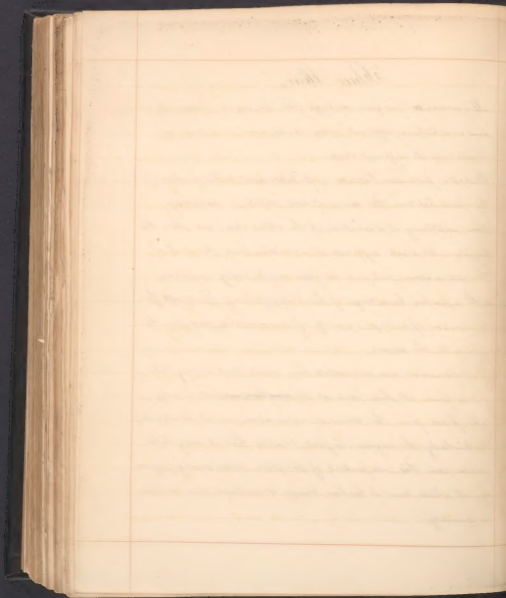
Fluor Albus,

Is a serous, or puriform discharge from the vagina, produced by disease; which in different women varies much in colour, as leucines in its different stages.

But the particular part, or parts subservient to the secretion of this fluid has been the source of some dispute, or controversy.

Some supposing it a secretion of the uterus alone, and others the vagina: Mr. Blake supposed it a secretion from the neck of the uterus alone; but such an idea may be easily confuted, with a proper knowledge of this part, it being too small for the secretion of so large a quantity of mucus as takes place from the vagina in this disease.

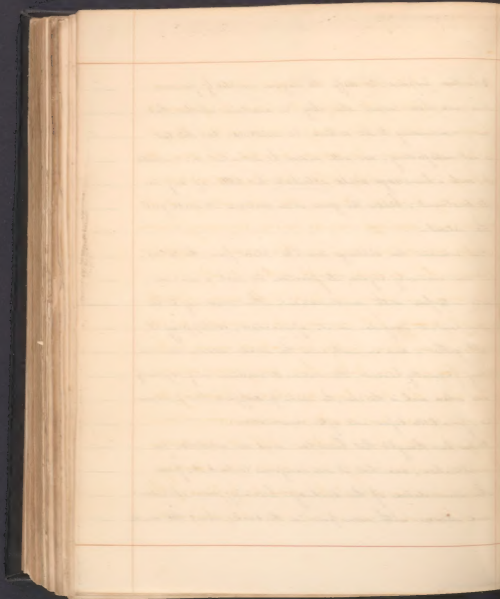
But observation and experiments have proved that it may take place from all these parts at the same time; and that it may take place from the uterus, or vagina alone; cannot be disputed; particularly the vagina; a fact to show that it may take place from this independent of the others, occurs during pregnancy, at which time it has been known to continue and increase in quantity.



It has been proposed, to stuff the vagina completely for some time and then inject the plug, to ascertain whether that part corresponding to the os tinea be moistened, but this test is not satisfactory, nor will seldom be submitted to, or should it, such a knowledge would attribute but little, if any in its treatment; besides the great inconvenience it would give the patient.

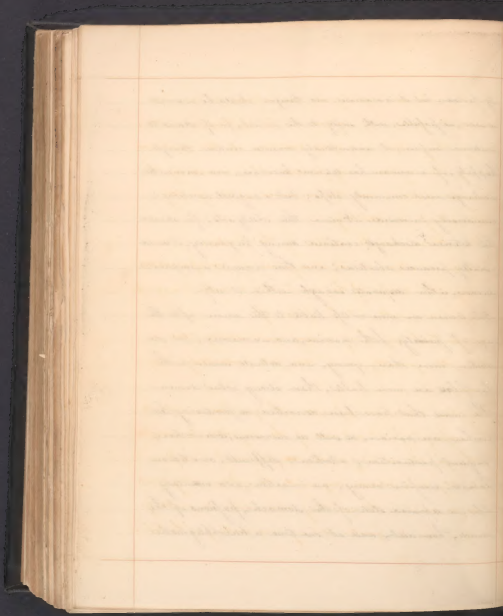
But whenever the discharge does take place from the uterus, it most commonly injures its functions in such a manner as to interfere with menstruation, either rendering it too abundant, or irregular in its appearance, or stopping it altogether; and in such cases the woman seldom conceives. Very frequently however, the menses do continue very regularly and when such is the case, the discharge disappears; but is increased, for a little before and after menstruation.

It has been thought that leucorrhoea served as a substitute for menstruation, and that it was dangerous to check it, from the circumstance of the discharge becoming more abundant and attended with more pain in the back, about the month



ly period, but it is a disease, and therefore should be removed
as soon, as possible, with safety to the patient; for if allowed to
continue profuse, it undoubtedly produces abortion. Though
happily, if a woman has leucine leucorrhoea, and conceives the
discharge most commonly stops; but a vaginal secretion is
considerably increased. Nature, thus wisely acts; for should
the leucine discharge continue during pregnancy, it would
finally produce abortion; and thus produce a complicated
disease, either desperate enough within it self.

All women are more or less liable to this disease after the
age of puberty, both married, and unmarried; but old
women more than young; and delicate women with
lux fibres are more liable, than strong robust women.
The causes that have been described as producing leu-
corrhoea are various, as well as numerous; amenorrhoea,
frequent parturition, abortion, difficult, and tedious
labours, excessive venery, an inactive, and sedentary
life, a depressed state of the stomach, passions of the
mind, poor diet, and at one time a leucophlegmatic

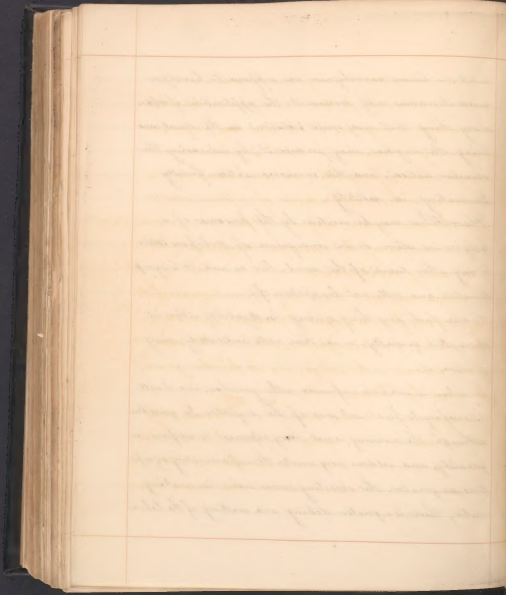


habit, a bilious cacochymia was supposed to have produced it; worms may produce it, the applications of cold, or any thing that may excite irritation in the membrane lining the vagina, may produce it; by increasing the vascular action, and this increased action finally terminating in debility.

Fluor Albus may be excited by the presence of a polypus in utero, or in consequence of prolapsus uteri or any other disease of the womb, but as such, it is symptomatic, and will not be spoken of.

And in fact any thing giving rise to debility either in the system generally, or in these parts particularly, may produce it.

Leucorrhoea is sometimes confounded with gonorrhoea; and it will be necessary to point out some of the diagnostics. In gonorrhoea although the running is not very copious, it is uniform in quantity, and seldom very small, the inflammatory symptoms are greater, the smarting more severe in making water, there is a greater itching and swelling of the labia



a greater inclination to venery, and the glands in the groin are more apt to become enlarged: In leucorrhoea the discharge is irregular; at one time ~~very~~ profuse, and comes away in large lumps; whilst at another the discharge is hardly perceptible; nor is it preceded by or accompanied with, so high a degree of inflammation; and the most certain diagnosis of them all is a non-communication of the disease from the female to the male during cohabitation.

Leucorrhoea may occur in two very different states of the constitution, first as a state of plethora, marked by a full habit, florid complexion, and a healthy colour of the skin, attended with vertigo, and all the other diseases, produced by plethora.

Secondly, from a state of debility, accompanied with a pale countenance, sallow complexion, a spare habit and a small flabby pulse; and accompanied with pale filiations, and dyspepsia; and all these diseases produced by debility.



This discharge proceeding either from the lacuna of the
vagina, or the glandular, and exhalant apparatus of the
uterus, shows it self by there being too great a discharge from
the vagina; which though little taken notice of at first
becomes a disease of much care; requiring the greatest
attention from medical aids; it will be necessary to de-
scribe that the vagina is always moistened with a fluid
secreted by the lacuna on its surface; and that there is a
secretion from the cervix uteri, and a serous exhalation
from the ~~membrane~~ lining the cavity of the uterus
itself, and the balance between the secretion, and
absorption, naturally is such, that except on particular
occasions no fluid is discharged from the vagina.

but when these parts become diseased the secretion is great
ly increased, and whether proceeding from the vagina
alone or partly from the uterus, the name of *gleeta*
alba is given.

But as this disease advances, the discharge becomes fetid, and
often of a dark colour, and mixed with blood; even corroding



the host, that it may come in contact with. The general health becoming more and more impaired, with paleness of the countenance, dyspepsia, sports, chilliness, loss of appetite, great debility; the function of digestion is ultimately interrupted, and in women of weak habit always from the first; the urine is turbid; and menstruation always interrupted with considerable pain in the stomach, back and loins, a flushing of the face, alternated by a ghastly paleness, with difficult respiration, and palpitations, the feet and ankles become oedematous; her sleep is much disturbed with frightful dreams, and affords, but little or no refreshment; and the patient after a process of time becomes emaciated; all of the symptoms becoming aggravated, hectic fever with dropsy in all its forms, at last supervene and terminate the miserable existence of the unfortunate sufferer.

When Leucorrhoea terminates in death, the internal surface of the uterus appears, on dissection to be pale flabby, and relaxed, indicating a previous congested state of the blood vessels.

In the treatment of leucorrhoea, we should endeavour to re-



tify the constitution, and bring it as far as possible to a state
of perfect health and in so doing it will be necessary to keep in
view the two different states of the constitution in which
it may occur.

If the patient be plethoric, or robust, the first indication
should be to diminish the fullness, and activity of the
blood vessels, by gentle laxatives, low diet, and if necessary
by the lancet. Regular exercise is of much benefit,
but care should be taken not to fatigue the patient
as fatigue always has a tendency to increase the discharge.

But if the disease occurs in a weak habit; or the pleth-
ora, which previously existed be removed; and the pa-
tient left in a debilitated state the internal rem-
edies should be more directly tonic; and injections, of
various astringents employed. The sulphate of alum-
ine, and a decoction of oak bark, are highly recom-
mended; the parts should be kept clean, and washed
clean previous to each injection.

In exposure to cold, or damp weather should be avoided, as it



tenacity is always certain to increase the discharge of secretions of the mucous substance; this being undoubtedly an increased mucous discharge of these parts, produced by disease.

The internal remedies are given with two different intentions the one acting on the secreting membrane, correcting their morbid secretions; the other class are substitutes, and restoratives of the strength.

Purgatives have been recommended, with a view to carry off the morbid matter of the intestines, and its use would appear indispensable, as we well know, that, when this alimentary canal is cleared, the system is better prepared to be acted on by any other medicine that may be thought proper to be administered; but purgatives should be given only to keep the bowels open so as to prevent catarrhs, which is a concomitant of this disease. active purging should be avoided, as it would add to the disease, from its debilitating effect; though flow as acting specifically on the mucous membrane of the rectum, have been strongly recommended by most writers.



emetics on account of their operations on the stomach, and shew-
ing canal, are of considerable advantage, and are strongly
recommended by most writers; and in fact this appears indis-
pensably necessary, for if as Caldwell states, this disease depends
upon a morbid state of the stomach; will not emetics be the
most proper plan to pursue, they being succeeded by carmin-
atives, stomachics, and tonics? But should not this disease
arise upon this state of the stomach, the well known
effect of emetics in preparing, or predisposing the system
to be acted on by other remedies, which should be given
would justify the administration of them.

Another justification of the use of emetics, is the well known
powerful, and universal sympathy of the stomach, with
almost every part of the body, or at least the serous surfaces
; and the peculiar, and happy effect they have on those last
named parts; for when the secretions are healthy, they are
encouraged; and when diseased, meliorated.

This is manifestly the case with the bile, the urine, the
cutaneous (respiration), and the fluids secreted in the



cells of the cellular membrane, and the other larger cavities of the body; and well is now known that Leucorrhoea is a venereal excretion from the uterus, or vagina. The administration of emetics would appear, not only useless, but even possibly necessary; and the best it must appear is last emetic, or Purgative, or these combined. But this one ~~most~~ important fact, must not be forgotten; that emetics should not be used at all during the existence of sthenorrhoea. After the clearing of the alimentary canal, the next step will be the administration of tonics, and those which invigorate the digestive viscera, should be given, such as lime water, myrror, cortex Peruv, stat, chulard, loca tea. &c. accompanied with the cold bath.

Various other medicines have been recommended with a view of acting specifically on the secreting membranes, such as cicuta, balsam of gilead, diuretic water, colomel, electricity, balsam of castor, spirit of turpentine, cantharides &c; whose medicinal good effect was unknown, until a few years past, though recommended by most writers.



Dr. Robertson, a surgeon at Edinburgh, appears to have been the first, who strongly recommended this, now considered specific medicine in this disease, and came the nearest to a correct administration of it.

In his administration of it, he generally began with from 3℥. or 3℥ss. of the tincture, in 3℥. of water; a table spoonfull of which, was taken thrice a day, gradually increasing the dose, untill his Patient had taken 3℥. of the tincture in twenty five hours. 3℥. of the tincture being then added to 3℥ss. of water, and given untill considerable pain was produced, or a puriform discharge from the vagina took place; But others who have followed the same practice, say they have not seen very beneficial effects arise from it, but from the above authority, we might conclude, that under some circumstances, it would prove beneficial, if the case should be peculiarly such as to yield to its effects. But the practice of Dr. Ferrius, which appears to bear some analogy to the practice of Dr. Robertson, shows beyond doubt the want of any certain specific effect of the tinc-



-tion of cantharides in this disease, when properly, and judiciously administered, and accompanied with the proper topical applications.

Dr. DuRoi divides the disease into three different stages; treating each according to the state of the constitution, and likewise the appearance of the discharge.

1st Where the discharge resembles the white of an egg, or thin starch.

2^d Where it assumes a purulent appearance.

3^d When it is of a greenish appearance; and sometimes streaked with blood.

In the first stage, the woman must observe strict cleanliness, washing the parts in warm water in preference to cold. The system being not much affected in this stage; he commences giving the liniment without promising either blood letting, or purging, which is indispensable and necessary if any inflammation or diathesis prevails, the dose is 30 drops three times a day to be given until strangury is produced,



and if this does not effect cure, give it again, and again increasing the dose five drops every third day, which is to be given in a little sugar and water, or any other pleasant vehicle; it will be necessary to observe, that the tincture used by Dr. Doan is 50 percent, stronger than that found in the shops; hence it would require 55 drops, to make it equal to that used by him. Should the pain be violent, being produced from strangury it may be relieved by the administration of camphor, or opium, the warm bath, or an anodyne enema, a flannel or linen cloth wringed in strong Spt. of camphor, and applied round the pelvis, will be found very beneficial; a camphor enema is likewise of much utility. Solingeni injections may be used in this stage, the acetate of lead \mathfrak{ss} , or Sulphas. zinci, \mathfrak{ss} to 1 pt. water; the parts should be well cleansed previous to each injection. When the secretion becomes thinner, and more copious, astringents are very necessary, as the sulphas cupri. In the 2^d stage there prevails much fever, and the system is much affected requiring a strict attention to the antiphlo-



-gistic regimen, purging, blood letting, &c. before we
can use the above tincture; after which, we may use the
tincture as before directed, bearing in mind, if the first dis-
charge does not relieve it, to produce it again and again; and
when the discharge becomes thinner we should use astringent
injections, *℞ Sulphas Cupri* in proportion to 3℥ of water; keep-
ing in mind that the vagina should be well cleansed
previous to each injection; and that nutt. seed oil injec-
tions should previously be used, *℞ acetat Plumbi* to one quart
of water; But when the discharge does become thinner, then
we may use the astringent injections; as in the first stage.
In the 3^d stage there is an interruption of the menses, a
callow complexion, and a higher degree of inflammation
than in either of the others: Hence we should, bleed, purge
and put the patient on as low diet as possible previous to the
giving of the tincture.

It frequently happens that the strangury is obliged to be pro-
duced 3 or 4 times before a cure is effected;

The astringent injections should likewise be used in this



stage; washing the parts with warm water previous to each injection.

In young persons, astringent injections alone will sometimes effect a cure.

The French Physicians recommend the absorbents, as prepared chalk, magnesia, &c.

Language, debility, and fainting, is to be avoided by a generous nutritive diet, consisting of milk, with being left boiled up in it; yolk of eggs, stew, veal, and chicken broth; sage, panade, arrow root, &c. together with cordial medicines, but more particularly old port wine.

To strengthen the general system, besides those things which have been mentioned, we must have recourse to bitters of an astringent, and stimulating nature, as the cinchona bark, chalybeates, the preparations of steel, cold bathing both topical and general, &c.

Women, who are predisposed to, or affected with this disease, should avoid, all the exciting causes, as much as possible; such as a free indulgence in tea, and other warm liquors of a relaxing nature; and



likewise, an exposure to cold, and damp weather.

The patient should lie on a mattress in preference to a feather bed; avoiding too free an indulgence in sensual gratifications and rise early; taking such exercise during the day, as her strength will admit, particularly on horse back; in winter the patient should wear flannel shifts.

Standing long at a time, dancing &c, should be avoided; and in a word every thing that may produce fatigue.

